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History of one hundred years
of St. John's Evangelical

History of One Hundred Years ✓
of
St. John's
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Richmond, Indiana
1844-1944



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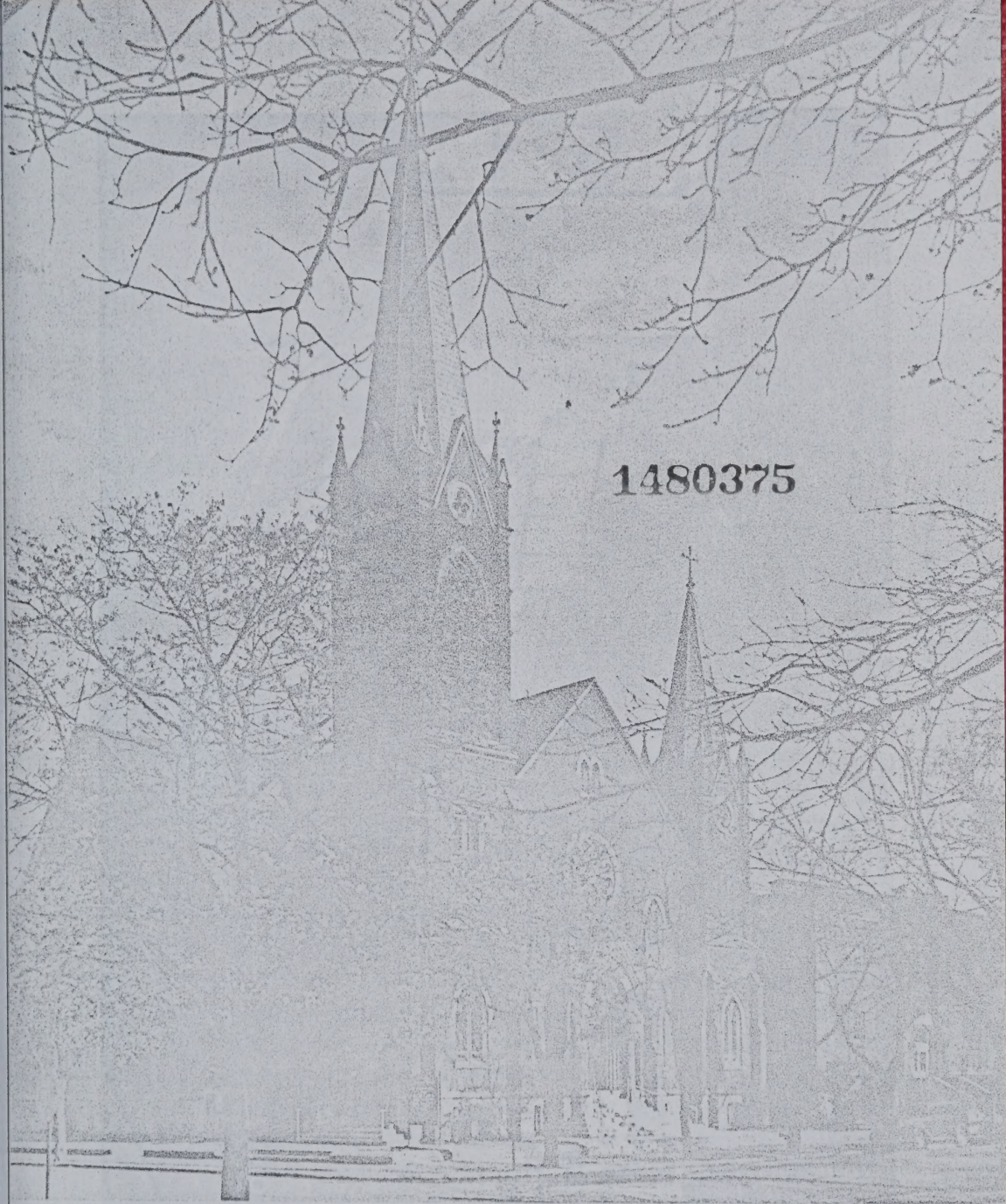
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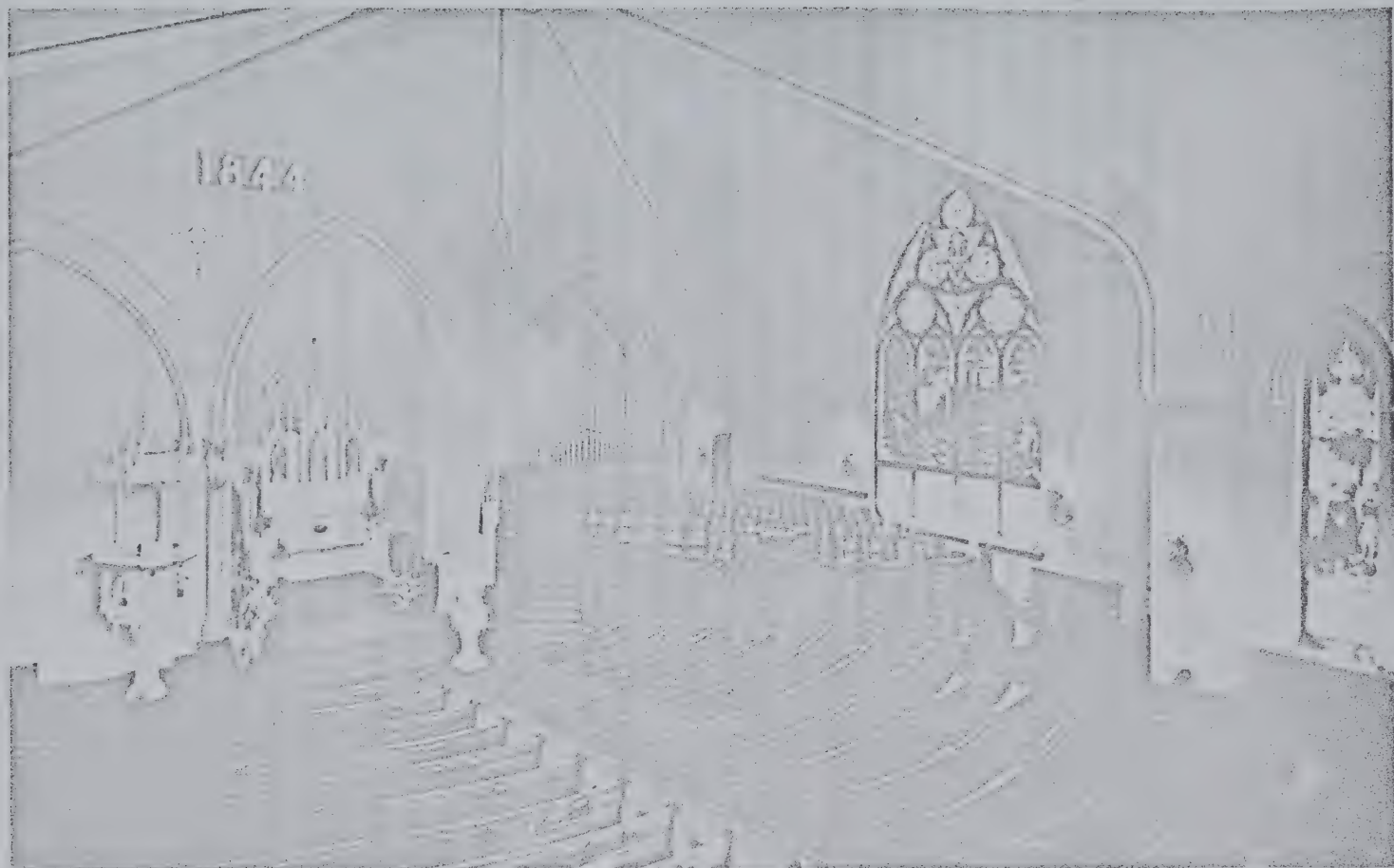
Richmond, Indiana

1844-1944

Church and Parish Hall
South Second and E Street



Church and Parish Hall in the spring of 1944.



Interior of the Church after its redecoration in 1944.

Foreword

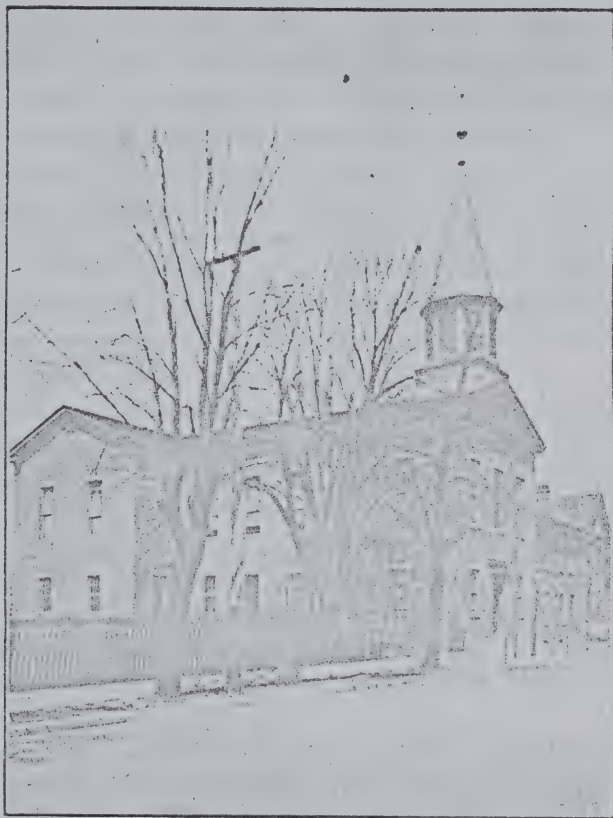
THIS booklet commemorates the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran congregation. Two histories have preceded this effort; one of them written in connection with the fiftieth anniversary, the other when the congregation celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary.

When the late Rev. A. J. Feeger wrote the account of the first fifty years, he was able to discuss aspects of the pioneer period with several charter members of the congregation who were still alive. This enabled him to obtain the information about trends, decisions and personalities which so often is lacking in an account of the formative period of an organization. This manuscript did not appear in printed form but it was incorporated in the historical booklet which he prepared at the request of the congregation for its seventy-fifth anniversary in 1919.

The text of the 1919 brochure, of necessity considerably condensed, with the addition of information recently obtained and a number of amplifications, has been used in this booklet to cover the first seventy-five years of the congregation's history. Data for the history of the last quarter of a century was obtained from the church records, interviews, and the minutes of the auxiliary organizations of the congregation.

It is an unusual coincidence that the story of the last twenty-five years was written largely by a son of the author of the preceding three quarters of a century. Luther M. Feeger was chairman of the committee which edited this publication, and associated with him were Edward Kaeuper, Harry Tubesing, and Richard Atzinger.

In passing it may be mentioned that without exception all the official records of the corporate church for one hundred years back, although not assembled in one place, are in an excellent state of preservation. Unfortunately, the early minutes of societies and auxiliaries could not be found. The disappearance of these records prevented a comprehensive presentation of this highly significant phase of the congregational life.



The old Church and adjoining Parsonage at the turn of the century.

The First Centennial

THE Centennial history of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran congregation dates back to the arrival of German immigrants, mostly from the vicinity of Osnabruck in Hanover, to Richmond, then a city of about 2,000 inhabitants, in the early thirties of the last century. In their native land their spiritual thinking had been influenced by men of the type of Harms, Deichmann and other conservative religious leaders.

There was no church in Richmond that could serve their spiritual needs in the German language. The nearest Lutheran church was at East Germantown (Pershing) in western Wayne county which had been organized in 1822. The immigrants brought with them their Bibles, Stark's book of devotion, catechisms, and other religious literature. They met for devotions in homes, but they missed the blessings of church fellowship and the ministration of the means of grace.

The first Germans arrived here in 1833. They were Mr. and Mrs. Bennett Baumer, Sr.; Henry Baumer, a brother of Bennett Baumer, Sr., and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Luppenbrink, son-in-law and daughter, respectively, of Mr. and Mrs. Bennett Baumer, Sr. Early in 1834, Bennett Baumer, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Bennett Baumer, Sr., arrived here.

Later in 1834, John Peterson, Christopher Jurgens, Fred Lefker, Christopher Klute and Christopher Shofer came to Richmond. Bernhard Knollenberg and David Haner (Hoene) came in 1838. These seven men subsequently took part in the formation of St. John's congregation.

Most of the immigrants had been farm hands or renters of small plots of ground, which virtually held them in the state of serfdom. Some of them had learned trades. They sought escape in this country from a depressing economic condition or from military service. They found employment in the trades, on nearby farms and in such industries as had been established here. They became home owners at an early date. The heavy tide of German immigration to Richmond began in the late thirties and continued until 1850, gradually receding in the period immediately following the Civil War.

The home of John Peterson, one of the first Germans to come to this city, situated on the southwest corner of what is now South Fourth and B streets, was used as the place where the Lutherans assembled for preaching services by itinerant ministers. Hymnals were scarce, so the minister would read a line and the group would repeat it after him. A



Peterson home at South Fourth and B streets.

melodeon provided the music. It was a day of hustle and bustle for the Peterson household when an itinerant pastor was to arrive.

"They came on horseback and grandpa had a stable to care for the animals. Mother (daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peterson) often talked about how she and the other children shined up the pastors' leggings and waited on their every needs," a granddaughter, the late Mrs. Mary Hebel Ward, recalled.

Services in the Peterson home were not confined to worship alone. Baptisms also were performed there, and for years the family preserved a glass dish which was used exclusively for this sacrament. It was used for nothing else, despite pleadings of the children of the household to use it at their play.

The Peterson homestead was torn down in subsequent years by Henry Knollenberg, who lived just south of it, and the lot remained a part of the Knollenberg yard until two double houses were erected.

The founders of the congregation were pleased when the Rev. G. H. Zumpe, a Reformed pastor, of Union county, conducted preaching services for them and baptized their children. He was with a group that had emigrated from Germany in 1832 and he accompanied them from place to place as they moved westward. They had found a temporary home in Union county where he became a member of the Ohio Synod of the Reformed Church. The Rev. Mr. Zumpe moved to Poland, Clay County, Indiana, in September 1840, and became the regular pastor of a congrega-

tion, serving until 1850 when he moved to Evansville. He returned in 1852 and served the Poland congregation until 1866.

According to the church record, the first child to receive baptism was John Adam Henry Lefker, a son of John Henry Lefker and his wife Mary, nee Schulhorst, born January 16, 1836. As sponsor the name of Gerhard Henry Steins was entered upon the records. Pastor Zumpe also baptized Mary Schovè and Caroline Juergens.

In 1837, a Pastor Muehlmann, a Lutheran, visited this vicinity and baptized Gerhard Henry Koehring. Further particulars relative to this minister are not available. In 1838, a certain "Reverend Mr. Reiss," served the congregation for a short time. He was a "ministerial tramp." The congregation again asked the Rev. Mr. Zumpe to serve them. Preaching services were held in the homes of the people. Whether the Reverend Zumpe made an effort to organize a congregation cannot be ascertained from the meager records of that period. Following his departure in September, 1840, the group was without pastoral care for nearly a year, when a German Methodist minister by the name of Kiessling visited them. He baptized several children, but evidently his ministerial acts were limited to this service as no other official acts are recorded.

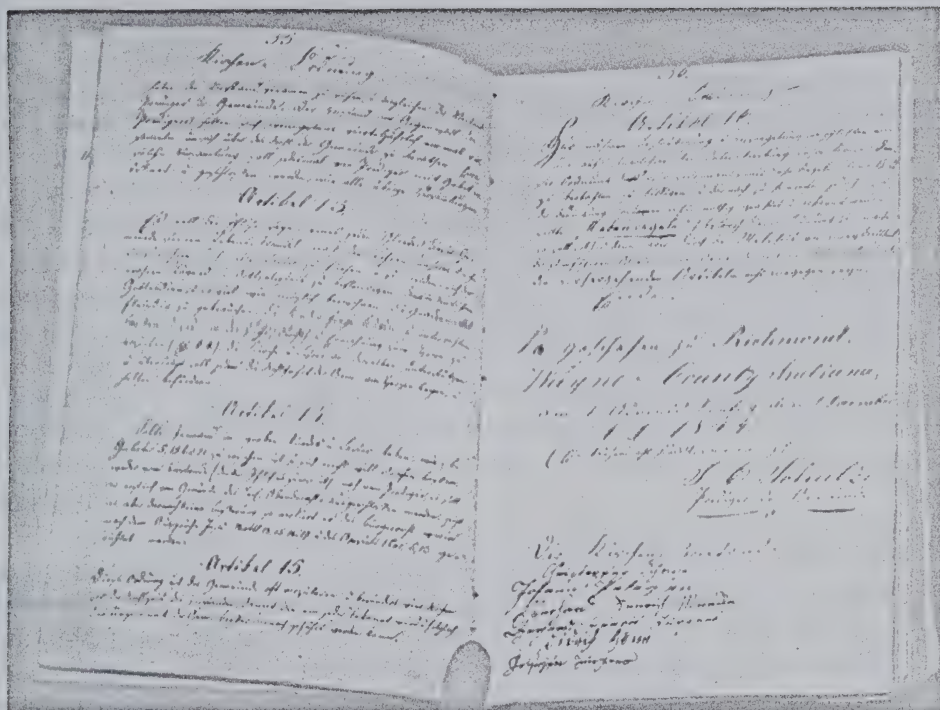
Visited by Pastor J. C. Schulze

Beginning with July 3, 1842, the record shows that the children were baptized by Rev. John C. Schulze, then pastor of the Lutheran congregation at East Germantown. Pastor John C. Schulze received his training in the Mission School of Berlin, Germany, under Pastor Gossner and came to America in 1840.

Licensed to preach, he was stationed at Germantown by the Pennsylvania Synod and succeeded in establishing a congregation among the Germans of that community; but in 1843 he joined the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States after receiving his ordination to the ministry by officers of the Western District.

It is not clear whether Pastor Schulze visited Richmond Lutherans at regular intervals or made his trips from Germantown to Richmond only when called by those who needed his services. Between 1842 and 1844 he baptized several children. He also solemnized the first marriage recorded in the church book—that of Christopher Kattman and Margaret Menke, September 8, 1842, and likewise conducted the first funeral on record, when Catherine Mary Klute was buried, December 18, 1842. The record makes no mention as yet of a celebration of the Holy Communion or of a confirmation service.

In view of the increase in the number of German Lutherans and the need for a resident pastor, the local group decided to extend a call



First constitution, with signatures of Pastor Schulze and vestry.

to the Rev. Mr. Schulze. He accepted the call and organized the congregation on the first Advent Sunday, December 1, 1844. This date marks the beginning of the organized existence of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran congregation.

The constitution which the congregation adopted was a lengthy document, and, with few exceptions its stipulations were soundly Lutheran. It remained in force until 1905, when the objectionable features were eliminated. The document underwent another revision in 1927. The original constitution was signed by the newly elected vestry, consisting of Christopher Schowe, John Peterson, Eberhardt H. Menke, Gerhardt H. Juergens, Diedrich Hoehne, and Christopher Juergens. It may be of interest to the present generation to know who some of the other signers were. We will add the first twenty-five names: William Schultz, Herman H. Schowe, Eberhardt H. Fraumann, John Adam Schnelle, Clamor H. Vette, Henry W. Rosa, Eberhardt H. Eggemeyer, Bernhard H. Knollenberg, John H. von dem Felde (Feldman), John D. Sittloh, John H. Eggemeyer, Gerhardt H. Juergens, Herman H. Klute, John H. Schowe, Gerhardt H. Schnelle, John Hill, Gerhardt C. Vette, John B. Sittloh, John H. Hanfeld, John B. Igelmann, Bernhard Wellenkamp.

John H. Knollenberg, Herman H. Kemper, John D. Knollenberg, Gerhard H. Kruevel.

The newly organized congregation began to hold divine services in an old public school building located at the corner of Front and Market streets, now called Fourth and B streets. Because of a scarcity of hymnals, the hymns were lined; that is, the pastor read the hymns a line at a time and the congregation sang. Occasionally the worshipers were denied the use of the school and their services suffered interruption, but in spite of these primitive conditions, the congregation prospered. Pastor Schulze was a man of faith who did not hesitate to confess by word and act what he believed. The services were well attended: Lutheran Christians who for some reason had been standing aloof were attracted to the congregation. With numbers multiplying, the congregation resolved to purchase a building site on Fourth street at the cost of \$125.00, and to plan the erection of a house of worship.

The little church erected in 1846, was a plain brick building, thirty-one by forty-two, having no buttresses, vestibule, or tower. John H. Eggemeyer was the contractor. The cost of the building amounted to \$600.00—a heavy obligation for a congregation composed of people who only recently had come from Germany and who were poor. The furnishings were primitive. A store-box draped in black served as an altar. The pews were boards fastened to logs, while the lighting system consisted of homemade tallow candles. Despite its modest appointments, the founders were proud of their church and gratefully praised God who had enabled them to erect a sanctuary.

It is not known when the new church was dedicated or whether it was dedicated at all. Neither the church record nor the newspaper of the day, *The Palladium*, mentions the dedication of St. John's church, although the church was located on what was then considered the second best street of the city.

As far as external growth was concerned, the congregation flourished. Immigrants from Germany and Germans from Cincinnati, Ohio, and other places who came to Richmond joined St. John's. The official acts of the pastor show that in 1847 he baptized twenty-five children, confirmed ten persons, solemnized six marriages, and conducted a communion service attended by one hundred and three communicants.

Unfortunately, the inner development of the congregation did not keep pace with its outward growth. Under date of September 16, 1848, the minutes of the vestry indicate that it was resolved to give Pastor Schulze timely notice that his services were no longer desired. Two months later it was resolved to announce through the secular papers the vacancy created in St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Richmond. Strange as it may seem, the minutes do not state the reason why Pastor

Schulze was obliged to leave. Tradition has it that he was too outspoken in his sermons. He delivered his farewell sermon December 31, 1848. He accepted a call to a Lutheran church at Springfield, Ohio.

The Rev. Mr. Schulze laid the foundation for the future expansion of the congregation, and he largely shaped the early policy of the organization. He died in Ironton, Ohio, in 1882, at the age of 76. He is buried in that city.

In an exchange of correspondence between Secretary Deuker of the congregation and Rev. Theodore Wiechmann, pastor of a Missouri Synod church in Cincinnati, the latter declined to be a candidate for the local pastorate. The Rev. Mr. Wiechmann warned the congregation against rationalistic encroachments and against ministers who were interested primarily in their own welfare.

Pastor J. G. Theiss is called

On February 27, 1849, the congregation called J. G. Theiss, a licensed candidate for the ministry and temporarily at home with Pastor Grau of Hamilton, Ohio.

The first Sunday in March, 1849, finds the Rev. Mr. Theiss in his new field of labor. In his letter of acceptance, addressed to Mr. Deuker, among other things he said:

"I desire to express my heartfelt thanks to the congregation and to the vestry for the confidence imposed in me in calling me to be your minister. At the same time I see the hand of God leading me into His vineyard. With God's help I purpose to do what is in my power to do. It is a special source of gratification to me that in addition to the regular ministry I am also called to labor in the school and to minister unto the spiritual needs of the young."

In his quiet and unassuming way, Pastor Theiss took up his labors, and his patient efforts succeeded in restoring peace and harmony in the congregation.

But there were other trials in store for pastor and people. Saturday, July 21, the alarming report was noised abroad that Miss Katherine Schulze had died of the cholera. The church record shows that from the beginning of August to the middle of September, a period of six weeks, twenty-four deaths occurred in St. John's congregation. Few homes were to be found where the voice of lamentation was not heard. The last victim to be claimed by the cholera was Henry Farvig.

During these weeks, the newly called pastor rendered a most faithful service to his sorrow-stricken people. In the spirit of self-denial which knows no fear of death, he visited the sick and dying. In some cases he even nursed the sick and prepared the dead for burial.

Nor was the congregation found wanting in its ministry of love in the hour of trial. Following the example of the congregation at Jerusalem, members of St. John's church made provision, especially for the needy orphans. Thus, the visitation proved salutary to both pastor and people, strengthening them in faith and affording them an opportunity to demonstrate their faith in works of love.

In spite of the heavy losses sustained by the congregation, there still were one hundred and sixteen contributing members on the list at the close of that year. From the records it appears that a committee was appointed to devise ways and means of meeting the congregation's expenses. The committee, consisting of the pastor, F. W. Deuker, J. Peterson, B. Knollenberg, L. Vette, and W. Rosa, made a classification of the members and recommended that fifty-three members be assessed four dollars each, twenty-two two dollars each, twenty-six one dollar and thirty-three cents each, and fifteen one dollar each, making a total of three hundred and five dollars and fifty-eight cents to be raised by the one hundred and sixteen members. Non-contributors, desiring the use of the church for baptisms, funerals, and the like, were expected to pay the vestry, in advance, the sum of one dollar for such privilege. There was a special fee for the support of the school. Since the pastor received a salary of two hundred dollars, and paid his own house rent, the assessments provided sufficient money. The janitor received four dollars a year for his work.

The congregation sent its first lay delegate to the synodical meeting at Lewisburg, Ohio, in 1849. The Rev. Mr. Theiss joined the Ohio Synod at this convention. Marked increases in membership were recorded in 1851 and 1852. Differences of opinion on church practice brought about a separation of members in the spring of 1852, and St. Paul's Lutheran church was organized by those who withdrew.

The Rev. Mr. Theiss was deeply interested in children. Under his pastorate, the parish school, which he taught, flourished, outgrowing its seating capacity. On May 29, 1853, the congregation resolved to erect a school building as soon as subscriptions amounting to two hundred dollars had been obtained. However, at a meeting held two months later, that resolution was reconsidered, and it was decided to add a second story to the church building, the ground floor to be used as a school. The building committee consisted of John Eggemeyer, Diedrich Meyer, and John Peterson. The contractors were Diedrich Meyer and F. Veregge. For some reason work on this structure progressed slowly, and in the spring of 1856 it was resolved to add eleven feet to the front of the building and to erect a tower. The congregation was truly grateful for its remodeled church. A bell weighing seven hundred pounds was purchased, and, on the twenty-first Sunday after Trinity, summoned the congregation

to assemble for church dedication services. On this occasion sermons were delivered by Pastors Groth and Stierewalt, the latter preaching English in the evening.

Another important change made at this time was the elimination of the rationalistic hymn book which the founders had brought from Germany, and the introduction of a Lutheran hymnal to be used in church and school. The hymnal of the Missouri Synod was introduced.

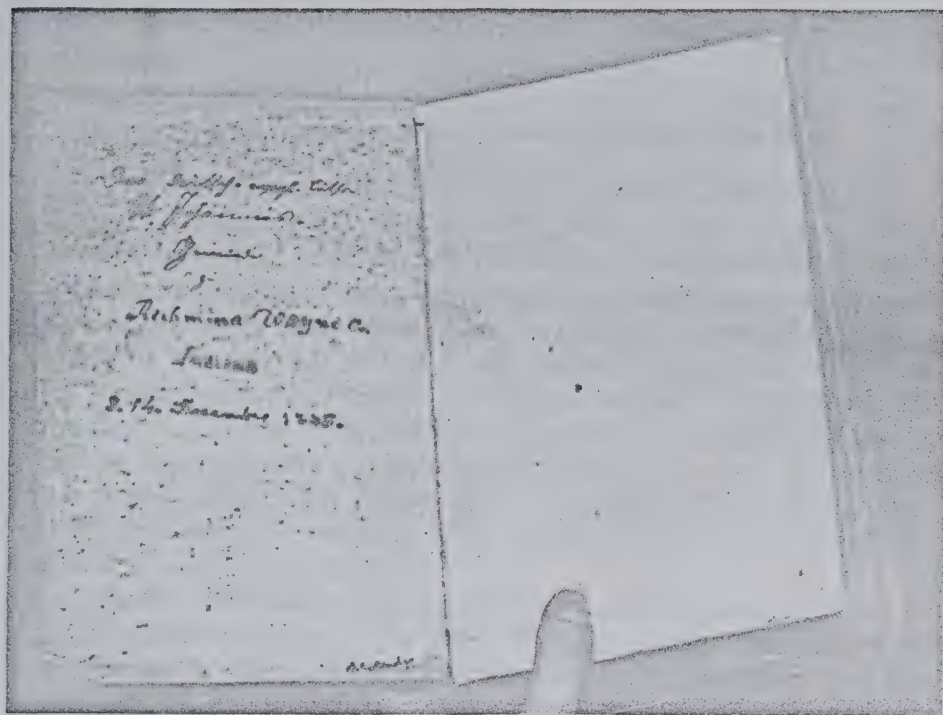
In the early part of 1856, the Rev. Mr. Theiss informed the congregation that he disapproved of the method of hiring pastors for a specified term and he also asked for an increase in the salary of \$200 a year which he was receiving. Following an unsuccessful effort to reconcile differences, he resigned and accepted a call to a congregation in Zelenople, Pa. Later he joined the Missouri Synod. He was a native of Germany and had been educated in the Rauhe House under Pastor Wichern. He died in his seventy-sixth year in Madisonville, a suburb of Cincinnati, December 16, 1866.

Rev. Carl Schadow assumes pastorate

The congregation called Rev. Carl Schadow as his successor on June 15, 1856. He succeeded in allaying dissatisfaction of members who had censured the action of the vestry in its relationship with the Rev. Mr. Theiss. The congregation purchased an organ from St. Paul's Episcopal church, increased the pastor's salary to \$300, and engaged Paul Mueller as the first teacher for the parochial school. Presently the pastor and teacher were at loggerheads, presumably over the inability of Mr. Mueller to teach the rudimentary branches in what the Rev. Mr. Schadow believed to be a satisfactory manner. The members took sides and the congregational meetings called to discuss the matter were so turbulent that the civil authorities were called to maintain order. In a meeting, April 24, 1858, the congregation dismissed the teacher, but the tension had become so acute that nearly one-half of the members withdrew to join St. Paul's church. Nearly a year passed before tranquility prevailed. The congregation adopted a resolution that members of secret societies were ineligible for membership and adopted it as Article III of the By-Laws.

The congregation had entertained the Western District of the Joint Synod of Ohio in 1856. Between June 1 and 5, 1860, the newly organized Southern District conducted its second annual convention in the congregation.

At its meeting in January, 1861, the congregation resolved to build a two story brick parsonage adjacent to the church. The building committee was composed of Dietrich Meyer, William Diedrich, Gerhardt



Pulpit Bible in use in 1845.

Fraumann, Louis Euler, Gerhardt Hasecoster, and Henry Sundermann. The building, a modest dwelling of four rooms, to which additions were later made, served as a parsonage until 1898. Pastor Schadow occupied the new parsonage for a short time only, and then resigned his pastorate, August 12, 1862, to accept a call to St. Matthew's Congregation of Detroit, Michigan, belonging to the Buffalo Synod. In his letter of resignation, addressed to the vestry, he stated that his conscience would no longer permit him to remain in the Ohio Synod. The situation was as follows: About the middle of the previous century a bitter contention arose within the Lutheran church of America, more particularly between the Missouri Synod and the Buffalo Synod, touching the doctrines of the Church, the Ministry, the Office of the Keys, and Church Government.

Pastor Schadow accepted the views of the Buffalo Synod and, since the Ohio Synod declared that these teachings were contrary to the Scriptures and the confessions of the Lutheran church, Pastor Schadow found it necessary to sever his connection. Notwithstanding, the President of the Southern District granted him an honorable dismissal.

Pastor Schadow received his theological training under Pastor Gossner at the Mission School in Berlin and joined our synod in 1849. He died in New Bergholz, New York in 1887 in the seventy-fourth year of his

life. At the time of his death he was a member of the New York Ministerium.

Rev. G. Loewenstein called during Civil War

The country was in the throes of the Civil War when St. John's met August 24, 1862, for the purpose of choosing its fourth pastor. Pastor G. Loewenstein, and J. Bauermeister, and also Candidate Graessle had been suggested for the pastorate. Reverend Loewenstein, pastor of the congregations at Sidney and Anna, Ohio, receiving the votes of the forty-two members present, was declared unanimously called. He was installed the second Sunday in September by Pastor Isensee. The improvement of the financial system, time and order of service, rules regulating the reception of new members received his immediate attention. He introduced the announcements for communion, the liturgy of our synod, and the liturgical form of worship. The Sunday School was abolished, the Christenlehre taking its place.

Pastor Loewenstein was an excellent preacher and attracted many persons to the services. The Civil War interrupted the flow of immigrants, but the membership grew to sixty. In 1865 the Benevolent Society was organized. Its object was to afford mutual help to members in periods of sickness and death. In 1867 a Cemetery Association, consisting of members of both Lutheran congregations, but independent of the congregations, was organized for the purpose of purchasing ground suitable for a cemetery. St. John's pledged itself to furnish half the money necessary for the enterprise. Originally, a plot of twenty-five acres was purchased at a price of \$4,200.00. The pastors of both congregations cooperated in drafting the constitution by which the association is governed.

Mr. George Maier took charge of the school in April, 1862. He was a conscientious teacher who loved his work. Under his efficient management, the attendance increased to such an extent that it became necessary for the pastor to assist the teacher. Teacher Maier resigned because of unkind treatment accorded him, but the grievance was peacefully adjusted. We also read of the resignation of the pastor, for what reason is not stated, but the resignation was not accepted.

Toward the close of 1870, the congregation resolved to erect a new church and the trustees were instructed to investigate sites. The plan was abandoned. However, an addition was made to the parsonage and a pipe organ costing \$1,104.00 was purchased. All this did not relieve the situation in the church auditorium. On ordinary Sundays the church was well filled, and on festival occasions it was packed to suffocation. The question of building a church was again considered in the

spring of 1874. Many suggestions were offered and there were lengthy deliberations as to the most economical thing to do. The congregation already had added a second story to the building and erected an addition to the front; hence, it was decided to build an addition to the rear of the church. The building committee was composed of the trustees, and David Hoehne, G. Drifmeyer, F. Rosa, Henry Cutter, F. Veregge, and C. Raukopf. The committee planned an addition of thirty-two by fifty-three with a projection of eleven by thirty-two to the rear, and the plan was approved. On May 17, 1874, the cornerstone for the addition was laid, and in October the enlarged church was ready for dedication. On this occasion Professor Lehman preached the German sermon and Doctor C. H. L. Schuette, the English. The improvements thus made cost \$9,000.00.

The Rev. Mr. Loewenstein presented a call from St. Paul's church, Dayton, Ohio, to the congregation on January 30, 1876. He was granted a dismissal. He died at Holland, Indiana, February 6, 1908, after a service of more than 44 years in the ministry.

Rev. H. Wickemeyer installed in 1876

The congregation called Rev. H. Wickemeyer, pastor of St. Paul's church, February 13, 1876. He was installed on May 21. In the following decade the voting membership of the congregation was doubled. An increased enrollment in the parochial school necessitated the employment of assistants to Teacher Maier. For a number of years Elizabeth Sudhoff, Caroline Hoehne, and Mary Raukopf, all daughters of the congregation, assisted in the school. In 1881, however, the school was divided into two classes and Miss Minnie Schwilk was called as second teacher. Two years later, a third class was introduced, and Miss Anna Doepken, of Ashland, Kentucky, was called as third teacher. Because of the meager salary, Miss Doepken resigned the following year, and Miss Mary Schmidt, of Hamilton, Ohio, was engaged. After serving two years, she was called to her eternal rest. Miss Lucy Vogt of Gettysburg, Ohio, was now called as third teacher. She taught only until May, 1891, and then resigned because of her approaching marriage. Candidate A. Cordes, graduate of our Teachers' Seminary, was the next to be called, and assumed his duties August 1, 1891.

With a pastor and three teachers to support, it may be of interest to know how the necessary funds were raised. The congregation had created four treasuries, one for the needs of the congregation, a second for the support of the pastor, a third for the support of the school, and the fourth for the support of the poor. The funds for the congregational treasury were supplied by annual assessments, levied as follows: The

heads of families were assessed four dollars (\$4), young men two dollars (\$2), and young women one dollar (\$1) per year. Rich and poor were treated alike, and the above rate continued in force without change at least fifteen years. In 1892 there was a slight change in the rate, heads of families being required to pay five dollars (\$5), young men two and a half dollars (\$2.50), and young women one and a fourth dollars (\$1.25).

The funds for the second treasury were raised by voluntary subscriptions. The school fees flowed into the school treasury and were levied as follows: children of the congregation paid 55 cents per month, outsiders 65 cents. If three children of a family attended school at the same time, the third child received free tuition. The Poor Treasury received its revenue from the regular Sunday offerings, excepting those collections which were announced for special purposes.

Inasmuch as there were but few really poor and needy in the congregation, the Poor Fund soon accumulated a capital of more than \$1,000.00, the interest of which usually was sufficient to meet the demands made upon this treasury.

The result was that the Sunday morning collections gradually dwindled away, scarcely amounting to \$100.00 per year. An offering at the evening service was not at all customary. And why should the people contribute when the treasury was full? In 1894, the three treasuries were consolidated into one, and school tuition fees were abolished. In 1906 the congregation voted that collections on Sunday should flow into the congregational treasury.

The Rev. Mr. Wickemeyer's salary originally was \$700, but later was increased to \$750 and then to \$800. Teacher Maier received \$300; increased to \$450 in 1866, and later to \$600. His assistants first received \$250, and later \$300. The janitor of the school received \$75 annually and the janitor of the church \$100.

Contributions for synodical purposes, institutions, missions, and the like, were gathered by means of special collections, the so-called "fifty cent plan" being used for a number of years. In addition to the regular collections for synodical work, special house collections were held and substantial sums contributed for special relief work, the liquidation of the synodical debt, new buildings, and the like. For instance, St. John's was not only instrumental in obtaining the Wernle Children's Home and ten acres of land at a cost of \$7,100.00, but itself contributed \$4,100 of the purchase price. In short, works of mercy appealed to the congregation, and the members responded liberally. They believed that giving for the extension of God's kingdom and the spreading of the Gospel was part of the Christian life, and their love for Christ and their fellow-men constrained them to show their faith in works of love.

In order to keep in touch with the Synod's work, the congregation

regularly sent a delegate to the synodical conventions and also discussed the work of Synod in congregational meetings, especially after the Children's Home was located here. The majority of families also read the church periodicals and their books of devotion.

By 1891, the need for English services became an issue in the congregation. The Rev. Mr. Wickemeyer, having received his training in the Mission School at Hermannsburg, Germany, was unable to minister to the members adequately in the English language. After discussing the situation in a number of meetings and also seeking the counsel of the General President, Doctor Loy, who advised against any rash action, the congregation at a meeting held December 21, 1891, resolved to grant the members concerned permission to organize an English congregation, provided the new congregation adopted the confessional basis and the church practice of the mother congregation.

The matter was in abeyance for several months in which various plans were discussed. The building of a new church was proposed and a committee of ten was appointed to investigate sites. Then the congregation voted to construct a second church, a so-called German-English one, evidently with the view of establishing a bilingual congregation. But this proposal was abandoned. Finally on June 5, 1892, the resolution to build a second church was reconsidered. The congregation then voted to grant permission to the Mission Board of the Joint Synod of Ohio to organize an English congregation. An honorable dismissal was granted to every member who wished to join the new congregation. The Rev. Joseph Beck was called to serve the new congregation and on Sept. 1, 1892, Trinity congregation was organized.

Whether the German or English language was to be used in the main service for worship perplexed the congregation during the pastorates of the Rev. Mr. Feeger and of the Rev. Mr. Nicklas. Both pastors pleaded for an increased use of the English language on the ground that many members could not understand German, but the congregation moved slowly in its departure from the use of the language of the founders.

Until 1903 there were no regular English services, but in that year the Sunday evening services were conducted alternately in the German and English languages. This continued until 1915 when the evening services in the Lenten season were conducted exclusively in English. At the request of a number of young people, but without obtaining authorization from the congregation, the Rev. Mr. Feeger continued to preach English at all the evening services. At a congregational meeting, June 20, 1915, he was severely reprimanded for dropping the German evening services. He then requested the congregation to drop the English services entirely and thus relieve him of the task of conducting services in two languages; but the congregation then reversed itself and resolved that



1. REV. JOHANN C. SCHULZE, 1844-1848

2. REV. J. G. THEISS.....1849-1856

3. REV. CARL SCHADOW1856-1862

4. REV. G. LOEWENSTEIN1862-1876

5. REV. HENRY WICKEMEYER, 1876-1895

all evening services thereafter should be conducted in the English language. The Sunday School, however, had been conducted in the English language for a number of years previous to this action.

It was not until September 2, 1915 that the congregation decided upon two Sunday morning services and arranged a schedule under which the English service began at 8:30 a. m.; Sunday School at 9:30 a. m., and a German service at 10:30 a. m. The continuous loss of members who were unable to understand German prompted the action of the congregation.

This schedule was maintained until July 10, 1931, when the congregation voted that English services were to be conducted every Sunday morning, and German services on alternate Sundays. On January 29, 1943, the German services were discontinued by vote of the congregation, but five German communion services were to be conducted each year as long as there was a demand for them.

In the meantime the erection of a new church challenged the attention of members of St. John's congregation. On March 5, 1893, the congregation voted to erect a new church on a location east of the old site on South Fourth street, and the trustees were authorized to obtain options on suitable sites. The trustees recommended the purchase of the site on the southwest corner of South Seventh street and C streets, owned by Mrs. Caroline Snyder, for \$2,500. Six weeks later the congregation reconsidered the purchase of this site, as some members had expressed the opinion that the congregation had no legal right to change the location of the church and that if were done, the opponents of the change could claim ownership of the old church property. Attorneys assured the congregation that it could build a church wherever it desired to do so. The congregation took no action to build a new church.

Interest charges on the loan for the purchase of the property, the withdrawal of members to establish Trinity church, and the panic of 1893 were factors in the creation of a heavy deficit in the congregational treasury. The reduction in the enrollment in the school prompted the congregation to vote, September 28, 1894, for the abandonment of one of the classrooms and the dismissal of one teacher. The congregation decided to ask for the resignation of the teacher receiving the fewest votes. The three teachers resented the procedure and all of them resigned. A few weeks later the congregation rescinded its action and asked Teacher Maier to reconsider his resignation, which he refused to do.

Teacher Maier had served for 32 years when he resigned. Many boys who later were to be leaders in the business, financial and industrial life of the community, were his pupils. He was born in Wuerttemberg, Germany, Oct. 6, 1836, and came to this country when 17 years old, to live with an aunt in Covington, Ky. St. John's school had an enrollment



Interior of old Church on Fourth street.

of thirty-five pupils when he began teaching here in 1862. He was the only teacher for seven years when the school was discontinued for a year. Upon its resumption the average enrollment for many years was between ninety and one hundred. Following his resignation, Mr. and Mrs. Maier lived in Fort Wayne for one year, then returned to Richmond to become superintendent and matron, respectively, of the Wernle Children's Home. They served for seven years when they retired. In connection with their golden wedding anniversary, in 1914, former pupils honored them with a largely attended reception in St. John's hall in the old church on South Fourth street. Teacher Maier died Sept. 5, 1917.

The Rev. Mr. Wickemeyer accepted a call to St. Paul's congregation in Michigan City and a dismissal was granted to him on November 4, 1894.

The Rev. Mr. Wickemeyer served as pastor in Michigan City for many years. Upon his retirement he lived with his daughter, Mrs. Robert Seabold in Fort Wayne, where he died May 1, 1923, at the age of eighty. During his residence in Richmond he was a member of the Board of the Wernle Children's Home.

New Church under Rev. A. J. Feeger

On November 24, 1894, the congregation extended a call to Rev. A. J. Feeger of South Chicago, Ill. He was installed on the first Sunday after New Year by Rev. John Vollmer, superintendent of the Wernle Children's Home.

Mr. C. W. Linsenmann, of Columbus, Ohio, was called and was installed as teacher of Class I about March first. Miss Schwilk, upon request, withdrew her resignation and took charge of Class II. No provision was made for Class III until the beginning of the new school year in September, at which time Mr. John Linsenmann, a brother of Mr. C. W. Linsenmann was engaged temporarily to teach Class II, while Miss Minnie Schwilk consented to take charge of Class III.

Mr. John Linsenmann, having completed four years of study in the Teachers' Seminary of the Missouri Synod, had consented to a year's interruption of his preparatory work; but at the close of the year the congregation extended to Mr. Linsenmann a regular call.

With the three classes now supplied with teachers a uniform system of instruction was adopted. New blackboards, maps, and other needed equipment were purchased. With the consent of the congregation new textbooks were introduced and the rooms were equipped with new seats and two new organs.

The close of 1896 showed that the school had successfully passed through a period of reconstruction, and that virtually all members of the congregation were sending their children, 138 in all, to the school.

In the early spring of 1897, Teacher John Linsenmann's health began to fail, and a few months later he was obliged to give up teaching. W. Treichler was called as his successor, assuming his duties about January 1, 1898. Because of failing health, Miss Schwilk resigned early in 1898, having faithfully filled her position for a period of 17 years. She was succeeded by Mr. John Gundermann who taught the class till March 1, 1899, and then resigned on account of ill health. A call was now extended to Mr. C. Beck and was accepted.

After a brief but serious illness Teacher Treichler, having undergone an operation, died at the home of relatives in Chicago, January 12, 1900. His remains were removed to Granton, Wisconsin, and laid to rest January 16, 1900. Teachers Linsenmann and Beck represented the congregation at the funeral service.

Mr. William Rathke was now chosen teacher for Class II. Nine years of uninterrupted and faithful work are placed to his credit. In the prime of life and after an illness of some eighteen months, he died January 12, 1909. His successor was Mr. H. D. Meyer.

After three years of successful labor, Teacher Beck accepted a call to the Martin Luther congregation of Youngstown, Ohio, to serve as its organist and first teacher.

He was followed by Mr. G. Schiermeyer who taught only one year and then resigned. The school was now reorganized and one class was dropped. This change was made during the fall of 1904. Just a few weeks previous Mr. C. W. Linsenmann had resigned in order to join the Missouri Synod. During his nine years of service and devotion and diligence, this gifted teacher did much to raise the standard and improve the efficiency of the school. Mr. F. Hunziker was next chosen. He served until March, 1911 and then accepted a call to Golden, Ill. His colleague, Teacher H. D. Meyer resigned on September 15, 1911, to enter a secular calling.

Miss Olga Henning of Palmer, Kans., who was called to succeed Teacher Meyer, served until June 15, 1913 when she resigned.

Teacher Henry Zimmerman of Pemberville, Ohio, was called as principal of the school, April 13, 1913. He served efficiently in this capacity until the parish school was abandoned in 1934. Teacher Zimmerman was a capable schoolman and interested himself in the promotion of the activities of the young people. His daughter, Miss Ruth Zimmerman, succeeded Miss Henning as teacher of Class II, remaining until she resigned June 6, 1920. Miss Gertrude Nicklas began teaching Class II in the fall of 1920 and continued in that capacity until the close of school in June, 1926. Miss Josephine Ballmer of Oak Harbor, Ohio, was called as her successor on May 8, 1926.

The decrease in the enrollment of the school prompted the congregation to consider a proposal of the Board of the Wernle Children's Home that the two schools be consolidated. The difficulty of maintaining adequate schooling facilities in the Children's Home was responsible for the overture of the Board. The congregation voted on April 6, 1930 to receive children from the Home who were in the Fifth to Eighth Grades inclusive and on July 10, 1931, accepted the lower grades for the next school year.

By April, 1934, the enrollment of children of the congregation in the school had dropped to 22 and the Wernle Home had 23 enrolled. The cost of operating the school was approximately \$2,200 a year. Teacher Zimmerman resigned. The congregation voted on May 11, 1934, to discontinue the parish school. Miss Ballmer was a teacher until the school was discontinued.

Owing to financial considerations in 1896 the congregation decided to dispose of the property on South Seventh and C streets which it had purchased for a church site. However, no buyer could be found. Young people of the congregation who had subscribed \$3,500 toward the erection of

a new church were disappointed at the turn of events. The Rev. Mr. Feeger suggested to the young people that a new pipe organ be purchased to replace an instrument that had given nearly 30 years of service. The project appealed to them and within a few weeks they had financed the purchase of a two manual pipe organ with two pedals and twenty-four stops. The instrument was built by the Sole Organ Company and cost \$2,725.00. The organ was so constructed that it could be placed in a new church. The Ladies' Society, which on numerous other occasions had shown a generous spirit, contributed \$500 toward the purchase price. The new organ was consecrated on the second Sunday in January, 1896, with Prof. E. Schmid of Columbus, Ohio, delivering the sermon. A cantata was presented in the evening. When the present church was built, the organ was rebuilt and placed in it. The present organ costing \$7,523 was dedicated in the fall of 1926. The organ loft was remodeled and the console was moved to its present location in 1941 at the cost of about \$500.

Another festivity of more than passing importance was the Golden Jubilee marking the fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of the first church, celebrated during September 1896. The congregation invited its former pastors, Loewenstein and Wickemeyer. At the morning service the Rev. Mr. Loewenstein delivered the sermon and Rev. A. J. Feeger read a brief history of the congregation. Rev. Wickemeyer preached in the afternoon. In the evening a musical program was given by the young people, concluding with a brief English address by Pastor J. Beck.

Carriages were in waiting for the oldest members of the congregation then living and special seats of honor were reserved for them at the main services. The members thus honored were the following: David Hoehne, Wm. Deuker, Henry Feldman, Henry Weber, Henry Egge-meyer, Wm. Sieck and Bernhard Igelman.

In 1897, mid-week Advent services were introduced, the collections from these services being set aside for the support of poor students having the ministry or teaching profession in view.

The congregation decided, January 16, 1898, to build a new parsonage on the Seventh Street lot. A committee of twelve married men and ten young men was named to gather the necessary subscriptions for this undertaking. At the end of four weeks, this committee reported that \$1,870.00 had been pledged, whereupon the following members were appointed as a building committee: John Schultz, John Schroeder, Adolph Blickwedel, Adam Boes, Victor Loehr, and William Tinapple. Henry Nolte, Bernhardt Ahring and Henry Weber, the trustees, were also members of this committee. These brethren engaged J. A. Hasecoster to draw up plans for a ten-room modern two-story brick house having a spacious cellar. These plans were approved by the congregation, and

on April 11, the contract was let to Dietrich and Hasecoster for \$2,282.00. The excavation and grading of the lot were done gratis by John Schneider and Henry Mueller, while the house, standing on the lot, was purchased by Henry Blomeyer. The cost of the parsonage was \$3,000.00. It was dedicated September 18, 1898. It was used for this purpose until November 28, 1939, when it was sold.

The congregation now had a new and spacious parsonage—in fact, one of the finest to be found in Synod—but, in addition to this, several hundred dollars more added to the old debt contracted in 1893. Enthusiasm, however, was not lacking. A number of brethren volunteered to collect weekly the small sum of five or ten cents from all contributing members. The results of their efforts were beyond expectations, for, at the end of one year, eight hundred and thirteen dollars (\$813.00) had been collected, and by 1904 they had, in this manner, freed the congregation of debt. They were known as the “Five and Ten Cent Committee.” Unfortunately, the records fail to state who these brethren were, although their names deserve to appear in this connection.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Feeger was observed by the congregation in a special service at which Dr. W. Stelhorn of the Theological Seminary of Capital University preached the jubilee sermon. Dr. R. C. H. Lenski of Anna, Ohio, extended the congratulations of the Western District of which the Rev. Mr. Feeger was president.

With the indebtedness of the congregation liquidated, a church building fund was established in 1905. By means of envelopes monthly contributions were made and placed upon the collection plates. At the close of June, 1906, the treasurer reported receipts amounting to \$436.00. He also reported that a number of members had refused further payment until the congregation had definitely decided on the location for the new church. Accordingly the trustees were authorized to locate suitable lots. At the October meeting they reported on two locations, one at the corner of South Seventh and E, the other on the corner of South Ninth and F. The congregation favored the property located on the corner of South Seventh and E. Having authorized the trustees to secure an option on the property, the congregation appointed F. Kauper, Jr., F. Hackman, Ed. Stein, and the pastor to secure the necessary subscriptions. Six weeks later the committee reported subscriptions amounting to \$4,500.00 with the balance still needed in sight. The trustees purchased the property for a consideration of \$5,000.00, and thus finally removed the obstacle which in 1892 had caused the church building project to fail. At a meeting held February 3, 1907, it was unanimously resolved (five members declining to vote) to proceed with the building of a new church. The following committee was appointed with power to act: A. Blickwedel, H. Bode, W.

Rosa, J. Schultz, W. Duning, Sr., F. Kehlenbrink, J. Schroeder, J. Schneider, E. Stein, F. Hackman, H. Nolte, W. Duning, Jr., H. Habighorst, G. Pille, H. Kauper, W. Kraemer, and J. Niewoehner. Mr. John A. Hascoster was engaged to draw up plans and specifications and to present them at a congregational meeting to be held April 28. The plans submitted were approved, and on June 2, the contract was awarded to Z. Bendfeldt & Son for the sum of \$22,697.00. The subscriptions for the new church were made payable in three installments, one-third of the amount to be paid when the cornerstone was laid, one-third a year later, the balance two years later. Unpaid subscriptions were secured by notes bearing interest.

The cornerstone was laid September 1, 1907, with Rev. C. M. Hecht of Dayton, Ohio, delivering the German and Rev. S. Schillinger of West Alexandria, Ohio, the English sermon. In the cornerstone were placed the Bible, Hymnal, Catechism, Augsburg Confession, Kirchenzeitung, Lutheran Standard, Minutes of the Western District, Richmond newspapers and a brief history of the congregation.

The church was dedicated November 28, 1908. The Rev. Charles J. Loehr, son of Mr. and Mrs. Victor Loehr, members of the congregation, prepared an account of the dedication which appeared in the *Lutheran Standard*, November 28, 1908. In part it said:

"The 18th day of October was a gala day for the Evangelical Lutheran St. John's Congregation in Richmond, Indiana. . . . At 9 o'clock in the morning the members and friends assembled in the old church on South Fourth street for a farewell service, at which the pastor, Rev. A. J. Feeger, preached a very touching sermon. Tears came to the eyes of many, as they parted from the old church, for those walls and all they enclosed, were holy to them. After the farewell service a procession of nearly 1,000 people, with pastors, church officers and building committee in the lead, the church officers, carrying the Bible and holy vessels, marched to the new church, corner South Seventh and E streets. After the singing of an appropriate hymn, the pastor unlocked the door in the name of the triune God, and while the school children were singing, a vast concourse of people filed into the church, until it was taxed to its utmost capacity. Although the church will easily accommodate more than a thousand people, many were unable to gain entrance. The act of dedication was performed by the pastor, with the assistance of the Pastors Wickemeyer, Hemminghaus, Beck, Gahre and the undersigned (C. J. Loehr). Rev. H. Wickemeyer, of Michigan City, Ind., a former pastor of the congregation, and Director Hemminghaus, of our Woodville Seminary, preached very impressive sermons in German at the morning service. Just as large a congregation gathered for the evening service, as had filled the church in the morning, and again a great many could not be admitted,



Interior of the Church after its dedication in 1908.

for every available space was filled. Rev. R. C. H. Lenski, president of the Western District, preached English, and Rev. Gahre, superintendent of our orphans' home, German, and Rev. J. Beck gave a short address in English. The male choir of Dayton, Ohio, and the mixed choir of St. John's enhanced the service with their beautiful anthems.

"A service was arranged for Tuesday evening, at which the sons of the congregation who are now in the ministry, broke the bread of life. Rev. J. Maier, and Rev. W. Grabeman preached in German, and the undersigned (C. J. Loehr) in English. The Wednesday evening service was especially for the English friends of the congregation; Rev. H. P. Dannecker preached the sermon. The last in this series of services was on Thursday evening, when the young people gave a sacred concert, rendering the cantata 'Thy Kingdom Come,' under the able leadership of Prof. Hunziker, and accompanied by a local orchestra.

"St. John's new church is one of the most beautiful in Richmond and in our Synod. It is 102 feet long, and 64 feet wide, and 36 feet high at the point of the arch. Two steeples at the front of the church, one 146 feet

high, and the other 86 feet high, each adorned with a cross, the insignia of our holy faith, give the building a very churchly appearance, and point to Him whose house it is, and to whom alone the congregation gives all honor and glory. The church has one main entrance, and two side entrances, leading into a large vestibule, and again three entrances from the vestibule to the large and beautiful auditorium. The floor is on an incline so as to give each worshiper an unobstructed view of pulpit and altar. The whole floor is covered with a rich red Brussels carpet, a gift of the ladies' society. The beautiful altar stands in a large arched niche at the east end of the auditorium. In the center of the altar is a statue of Jesus, extending His hands in blessing, and on the one side the Apostle Peter, and on the other the Apostle Paul, as representatives of the New Testament. Under the statue of Jesus is a masterly representation in bas-relief, of the Last Supper according to the painting of Da Vinci; and on each side of the altar is a life size statuary angel, with a seven flame candelabra. These angel statues are gifts of the school children. The chalice-shaped pulpit has a statue of Jesus in front, and two of the evangelists on each side. At the left stands the beautiful baptismal font, in perfect harmony with altar and pulpit. The altar, pulpit and baptismal font are enameled in immaculate white, and richly decorated with gold leaf. To the left of the altar niche is the two manual organ with 24 registers, and the elevation for the choir large enough to accommodate about 50 people, and back of this elevation and aside of the organ a room for the choir. To the right of the altar niche is the large and comfortably arranged sacristy. The pews are of the finest quarter-sawed oak and slightly curved and placed in a semicircle.

"The beautiful cathedral glass windows were furnished by the Von Gerichten Art Glass Co., of Columbus, O. There are two large 16 x 24 center windows: the one on the south side representing 'Jesus in Gethsemane' with the three sleeping disciples in the back-ground, according to the painting by Hoffmann. The other on the north side represents 'The Resurrection,' according to Schnorr and Duerer. Although the figures are six in number they are all life size and seem so real, as if they were living persons. The other four windows represent the birth of Christ, the ascension, Jesus knocking at the door, and Jesus the good Shepherd, all figures life size. All the windows except one were given as memorials. The illumination is with electric light; in the center a large, beautiful chandelier with 64 lights, and numerous bracket lights on the walls. The fresco work was done by Schanbacher, of Springfield, Ill., and is a magnificent work of art. The basement is divided into two large rooms for Sunday-School and Christenlehre and rest rooms and furnace room. The church is heated with steam. The cost of the building including organ and furniture is \$43,000 and the lot cost \$5,000. Although the con-

gregation, by no means, belongs to the wealthiest of our Synod, by far the greater part of the money is paid already or pledged. And it is noteworthy that this money is raised by the members themselves, without outside help, and without resorting to questionable methods and schemes to raise money for the Lord's work."

When the Rev. Mr. Feeger closed his pastorate, the indebtedness on the church had been reduced to \$6,000, but payment of this amount was provided for by bequests in the wills of a number of members.

The old church auditorium on South Fourth street was placed at the disposal of the young people of the congregation to serve their social and fraternal needs. Three hundred opera chairs* in the old high school building were purchased for \$200. The Young People's Society purchased a curtain of the old Phillips Opera House and fitted up a stage at a cost of \$368.00. This church property was sold in December, 1921, and transferred to the new owners in April, 1922.

The twentieth anniversary of the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Feeger was observed by the congregation on January 17, 1915, with Rev. H. Wickemeyer of Michigan City preaching the sermon in the morning, and Rev. Schmidt in the evening. The congregation presented an automobile to its pastor.

The Christenlehre, which had been introduced by the Rev. Mr. Loewenstein, was abandoned in 1913 for a Sunday School. Attendance at the Christenlehre, which was held on Sunday afternoon, had dwindled to children, a small number of young people, and occasionally a few of the old members.

Following an opening service of songs and a prayer by the pastor, the attendance at the Christenlehre was recorded and the collection taken by adults who sat with the various classes. There were no teachers of individual classes, but the pastor catechized the entire assembly. He directed questions at the children, adjusting the questions to fit the various age groups. If the children were unable to answer, the pastor asked for volunteers among the adults to supply the answer.

The Rev. Mr. Feeger terminated his service in the congregation with a farewell sermon, October 15, 1916, to accept a call to Christ church in Dayton, Ohio, where he served until November, 1938, when he retired. He spent fifty-nine years in the Lutheran ministry. He was a native of Germany, coming to Albany, N. Y., with his parents in 1868 when nine years old. He was educated in Northwestern University, Concordia college, and the Theological Seminary of Capital University. He died in Dayton, Ohio, February 27, 1941 at the age of 82. He served as president of the Western District of the Joint Synod of Ohio, in other synodical capacities, and was president of the Board of the Wernle Children's Home when the present structure was erected.

New School task of Rev. A. L. Nicklas

Rev. A. L. Nicklas of Ann Arbor, Mich., was called, but his congregation, which he had served for 21 years, was reluctant to let him accept it. Calls were extended to a number of other pastors, but none accepted. On January 14, 1917, another call was sent to the Rev. Mr. Nicklas, who accepted it. He was installed by Rev. H. Wickemeyer and Rev. H. Specht on April 22, 1917.

One of the major problems confronting the congregation when the Rev. Mr. Nicklas assumed his pastorate was the physical condition of the parochial school which still was being conducted on the ground floor of the old church property on South Fourth street. On June 1, 1919, a committee was appointed, consisting of George Schnieder, Howard Thomas, and Henry Bode, to obtain options on a new site. The committee reported that it had studied the site of the two residences east of the church on South E street, the property of Mrs. Anna Kramer, 511 South Seventh street, adjacent to the church on the south, and the residence property of Mrs. Mary Landwehr, 449 South Seventh street, on the northeast corner of South Seventh and E streets.

The committee took an option on the Landwehr property at a price of \$2,150. The congregation ordered the sale of the property which Mrs. Henry Miller had bequeathed to the church, receiving \$1,039.77, which was applied toward the purchase of the Landwehr property. The congregation retained title to the Landwehr property until October 21, 1930 when it was sold.

Action on the building of a school and parish house was deferred until April 11, 1920, when the congregation decided to proceed with the project, appointing a building committee consisting of Henry Eickemeyer and the three trustees, Henry Bode, John Niewoehner, Fred Lohman, Carl Blomeyer and Willard Duning. Action, however, was again deferred until September 4, 1921, when another committee was appointed to determine whether the Landwehr property was adaptable for school and parish house purposes.

This committee, consisting of Henry Eickemeyer, George Schnieder, John Niewoehner, Teacher Henry Zimmerman and Henry Weyman reported, September 18, 1921, that the property was unsuitable for the proposed building. The congregation appointed a committee to ascertain whether the old Kramer property south of the church on South Seventh street could be purchased. On September 25, 1921, the congregation authorized the purchase of this property, then owned by Mrs. Verna Bell, for \$3,000.

The following Building Committee of fifteen was appointed; Henry Eickemeyer, George Schnieder, John Niewoehner, Teacher Henry

Zimmerman, Henry Weyman, Fred Theuer, Wm. H. Duning, Edwin Habighorst, Harry Wieschahn, Harry Schuerman, Edward Stegman, Jr., Harry Kehlenbrink, Charles Hirschfield, Ralph Koehring and Charles Gildenhar. The congregation also asked the women to appoint a committee of five to be added to the foregoing group.

Charles E. Werking and his son, Paul, architects, designed the structure, 45 by 62 feet. Mr. Henry Eickemeyer was authorized to proceed with the construction of the building which was a combined school and parish house. The alley between the church and the new property was vacated. The church and school were connected by a passageway. The cornerstone was laid with appropriate ceremony on May 9, 1922. The total cost of the structure was \$36,584. It is of fireproof construction. The basement contains a record vault, a spacious room for play or dining purposes, a kitchen; two spacious classrooms on the first floor; an auditorium with stage, dressing rooms and storage space on the second floor. At the time of its dedication it was one of the most modern schools in the city. It had standard accommodations for an enrollment of 72 pupils.

The combined school and parish house was dedicated October 29, 1922, by the Rev. Mr. Nicklas. The German sermon was delivered by Rev. A. J. Feeger, former pastor, and the English sermon was delivered by Rev. E. G. Richter of Detroit, Mich. The two pastors stressed the necessity of religious education as the basis of a complete and well rounded education. In connection with the dedication the Auxiliary of the Spanish War Veterans presented an American flag. The German language which had been taught in the school since its founding was abandoned by action of the congregation in February, 1918.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the church was observed September 21, 1919, in two special services, at which the two living former pastors of the congregation preached in the German language. The Rev. Mr. Wickemeyer of Michigan City, in a reminiscent manner, reviewed the contributions which each of the pastors of the congregation had made in the preceding 75 years, and the Rev. Mr. Feeger spoke on the adherence of the congregation to the confessional basis of the Lutheran church.

In the evening, the Rev. Charles Lochr, a former member of the church preached an English sermon. On the following Tuesday, the Rev. M. Grabeman and the Rev. W. Nordsieck, both former members of St. John's church, spoke at a meeting arranged for the young people.

A reunion of confirmed members was conducted Sunday afternoon at which short talks were made by Pastors Nicklas, Feeger, and Wickemeyer. A statistical review of official acts in the preceding seventy-five years showed there had been 1,991 baptisms; 1,539 confirmations; 542 marriages and 944 funerals.

The Rev. Mr. Feeger prepared a history of the congregation in booklet form. The original German text was translated into English by Rev. Mr. Nicklas. Included in it was the history of the first fifty years which he had prepared for the fiftieth anniversary. Much of the material, he said, of the period prior to the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Loewenstein had been given to him by Peter Weber, Gerhard Koehring and a few others who were members in the early days.

The Rev. Mr. Nicklas re-organized the Sunday School and departmentalized its functions. Under his leadership the enrollment was doubled within two years and additional rooms had to be established for classes. Sections of the basement which originally had been assigned for other purposes were converted into classrooms. The collection on one Sunday of each month was designated for mission purposes. Teachers assembled once a week for instruction in the lesson of the following Sunday. A new entrance to the basement of the church was erected by the Sunday School at a cost of \$1,100 in 1919.

The financial structure of the congregation was re-organized under the direction of the pastor. A budget committee was appointed and the fiscal year of the congregation was changed to run from January 1 to December 31. An annual financial report was prepared and distributed among the members. The Rev. Mr. Nicklas supervised the revision of the constitution, which the congregation adopted in its entirety on July 10, 1927.

Members contributed \$5,283 toward the \$500,000 fund which Capital University was collecting. The congregation also began participating financially in the support of the Dayton, Ohio, Inner Mission League. The annual meeting of the Western District of the Joint Synod of Ohio was conducted in the congregation in October, 1925.

Organized in 1865 to provide aid for its members in sickness and to help defray funeral expenses, the Benevolent Society operated on an assessment basis for many years, subsequently changing its fiscal basis to one of dues. When Trinity congregation was organized, its members became eligible to join the Society. Later it was known as St. John's and Trinity Mutual Aid Society. Owing to the decrease in membership and collateral causes, the Society disbanded in the spring of 1935 and its affairs have been in the process of gradual liquidation since then.

A similar organization for the women of the congregation was organized June 3, 1894. It functioned successfully for many years. It was known as the Ladies' Benevolent Society. It disbanded in 1938.

Unemployment and other phases of the economic depression, which seriously affected the income of many members of St. John's church, were reflected in the finances of the congregation, creating a problem that caused considerable worry for the church council and the Rev. Mr.

Nicklas. However, the congregation weathered this storm as successfully as it had other serious ones in the preceding decades of its history. Throughout his pastorate, the Rev. Mr. Nicklas was a sound and able adviser in matters pertaining to the spiritual growth and the business administration of the congregation.

The congregation maintained its liberal gifts for synodical purposes, and in addition made substantial donations to the Red Cross in the first World War period and to various phases of European relief work following the cessation of hostilities.

The congregation approved the organic union of the Joint Synod of Ohio and other States with the Iowa Synod, and later with the Buffalo Synod, which culminated in the formation of the American Lutheran Church of which the congregation is a member. Originally assigned to the Illinois District of the American Lutheran Church, the congregation later, owing to the proximity of Richmond to Ohio, was attached to the Ohio District.

The interior of the church was redecorated early in 1929 and was rededicated by the Rev. Mr. Nicklas on March 10. A musical service was conducted in the evening. The Ladies' Aid Society sponsored the improvement.

The Woman's Missionary Society was organized under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Nicklas on January 15, 1922, with a charter membership of forty-five. Its purpose was to unite all women in the congregation for mutual strengthening and furthering of missionary zeal. Mrs. Carl Kehlenbrink was the first president; Mrs. Rudolph Schuerman (now Mrs. Harry Wiesehahn), vice-president; Mrs. George Kauper, secretary and Miss Gertrude Nicklas, treasurer.

In March, 1924, the Junior Mission Band was organized with 46 children present. This group has functioned effectively in interesting its members in the mission cause and the larger work of the Church.

The twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Woman's Missionary Society was observed at a mother-daughter banquet, May 13, 1942, at which Miss Gertrude Nicklas presented the accomplishments of the organization and Mrs. Richard Morrow delivered the principal address. Special offerings taken in May of each year amount to approximately \$250; between 1935 and the outbreak of the war with Japan, the society supplied clothing, surgical supplies and miscellaneous articles for the natives in care of the mission station in New Guinea; since 1927 the society has contributed about \$400 for special needs of institutions, mission churches, religious workers, pastors at home and the India Lace school.

The Ohio District of the Women's Missionary Federation of the American Lutheran Church conducted its annual convention here in 1941, with 657 delegates and guests in attendance.

Forerunner of the Woman's Missionary Society was the Naehverein or Sewing Circle which dates back to 1879 when the women of the congregation began to meet regularly to mend clothing for the boys and girls of the Wernle Children's Home which was founded in that year. In 1938, it combined its functions with those of the Ladies' Aid Society and transferred a balance of \$326.84 to the treasury of that organization. It had a membership of 101 in that year.

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Tradition has it that the minutes of the Sewing Circle in its early days were kept on pieces of wrapping paper supplied by one of its members whose husband operated a grocery store. Mrs. George Horning, who was secretary-treasurer of the Circle from its organized beginning on January 26, 1905, until it disbanded, read a brief history of the Circle at its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1930. After telling how the women of the congregation met to assist the matron of the Wernle Home with the sewing, patching and darning of garments; Mrs. Horning said:

"These meetings were usually attended by 60 or more faithful workers who cheerfully rendered this bit of work of love for the welfare of the poor and forsaken orphan children.

"After 25 years of faithful services rendered for the Wernle Home, the ladies expressed a desire to cover a wider field in the work of benevolence, missions, etc. Arrangements for expanding the work of the Sewing Circle were made at a meeting held in the home of Mrs. Henry Cutter, January 26, 1905. In order to systematize the work as much as possible, it was decided to effect an organization, and Mrs. A. J. Feeger was named president and Mrs. George Horning, secretary-treasurer.

"Since the principal work of the organization was of a missionary character, it was decided to name the organization, the Ladies Missionary Society. . . . It was agreed to take up a free will offering at all future meetings of the Society. The work of the organization was carried on under the name of Ladies Missionary Society for about 15 years, but soon after the present Woman's Missionary Society was organized, the name was changed to Sewing Circle."

Mrs. A. L. Nicklas succeeded Mrs. Feeger as president. Meetings were held at the homes of members between 1879 and 1908. When the new church was completed in 1908, meetings were held in the basement of the edifice, and later in the Parish House. In 1915 a Birthday Box was established to collect funds for special purposes. The plan called for a special contribution from every member upon successive birthdays. In 1925 the plan was changed and birthday parties were held every three months. The last birthday party was in October, 1938. In the first 25 years of its existence, the receipts of the Circle were \$1,844.54 and disbursements, \$1,824.76. The Circle contributed to the erection of the

church and Parish House, purchased a window for the church, supplied the carpet for the church, made gifts to the Wernle Home, Red Cross, Foreign Missions, Social Service, Lutheran World Fund, and scores of other purposes.

Oldest of the women's organizations is the Ladies' Aid Society, successor to the Frauenverein. It has served the congregation, the Church at large and the community faithfully and in many capacities in the many decades of its existence.

It is not known definitely when the Frauenverein was organized, probably in the fifties or sixties of the last century, possibly shortly after the congregation was organized. Mrs. Louise Habighorst, 85 years old, recalls that her mother, Mrs. Henrietta Kehlenbrink, was a member of the Frauenverein, which would place its organization in the Civil war period.

The oldest records of the Frauenverein which have been preserved go back to 1891 where a minute shows the organization had \$300 in its treasury. The Frauenverein became the Ladies' Aid Society in 1920. Today it has eight Circles. It sews for the Red Cross and continues to do the mending for the Wernle Home.

It is impossible to enumerate here the many types of service which the members of this organization have given. From its earliest days to the present, the congregation, other groups and individuals have been the beneficiaries of its generosity. The Frauenverein and the Ladies' Aid Society have made contributions to the building of the church and Parish House, and for equipment and furnishings. The society has purchased supplies for Red Cross sewing at the church, sent gifts to the men in the armed service, made donations to the Wernle Children's Home and local institutions, forwarded gifts to needy ministers, and in scores of other capacities manifested the faith that dwells in the hearts of its members.

There has been no major improvement in the physical equipment of the church in which the Ladies' Aid Society has not participated. The minutes of the congregation are replete with the grateful acknowledgments of the corporate body for the gifts it has received from the Society.

Owing to ill health, the Rev. Mr. Nicklas resigned, effective July 6, 1934. He died at his home here March 8, 1935. He was born in Brady's Bend, Pa., and was the fifth child admitted to the Wernle Children's Home. He was graduated from the collegiate department and the seminary of Capital University. He served as trustee of the university and during his residence in Richmond was president of the Board of the Wernle Children's Home and custodian of its endowment fund. He edited the Quarterly Sunday School lesson helps for a number of years. He served a term as president of the Western District of the Joint Synod

of Ohio and was a member of a commission that surveyed the child welfare program of the synod. The Rev. Mr. Nicklas was pastor of a church at Marion, Ohio, for five years, and came to Richmond following a pastorate of 21 years in Ann Arbor, Mich. He is buried in Lutherania cemetery here.

Debt liquidated by Rev. O. R. Smith

Rev. Oscar Smith of Mt. Healthy, Ohio, was called August 27, 1934, and was installed on October 21, 1934. In the ninety years that had preceded his pastorate, St. John's church had developed a strong congregational consciousness; it had erected a beautiful church edifice, commodious enough for its requirements; its school and parish house was comparatively new; the various organizations within the church were well established, some of them dating back nearly for 75 years. An indebtedness of about \$17,000, incurred in the building of the school and parish house, although not particularly burdensome, nevertheless hampered congregational activities.

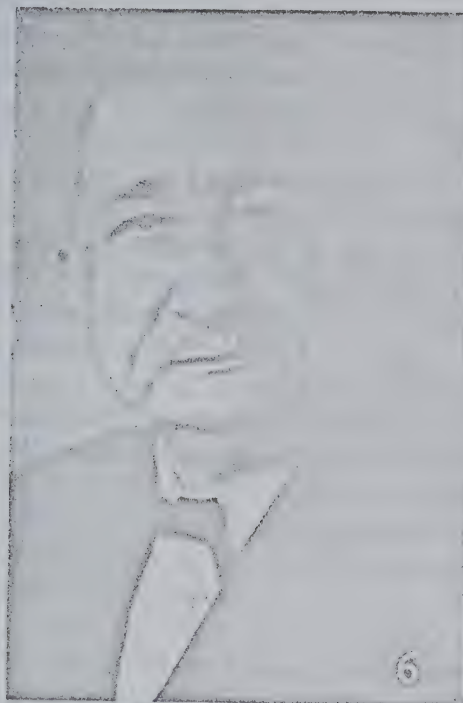
The Rev. Mr. Smith addressed himself to the liquidation of the indebtedness. At the end of the first year of his pastorate the debt had been reduced to \$15,925. In January, 1944, this indebtedness was retired entirely, for which tribute must be paid a Debt Liquidating Committee, with David Duning, chairman, which had been appointed in 1940.

The abandonment of the Parish School in 1934 brought to a close a system of religious and secular education that had been used in the congregation for 85 or 90 years. Although it is not definitely known whether the Rev. Mr. Schulze, the first pastor of the congregation, taught school in connection with his other pastoral work, it is safe to assume that he did, as he confirmed children in the German language exclusively which would presuppose that they could read and write German.

John Stammeyer, a German teacher, taught German to a few pupils in the old Warner building, which stood on the site of the present City Hall, in 1843 or 1844. This school, which antedates by about a year the formation of St. John's congregation, was supported privately by parents in order that their children might receive both religious and secular instruction in German.

When the second pastor, the Rev. Mr. Theiss, accepted a call to St. John's church in 1849, he expressed gratification over the fact that he also was to teach in the church school, which indicates that a parish school was organized either simultaneously with the founding of the congregation or in any event before 1849.

The abandonment of the parish school, whose primary purpose was the teaching of religion as a necessary part of a complete education,



6. REV. ALBERT J. FEEGER...1895-1916

7. REV. ALEXANDER L. NICKLAS, 1917-1934

8. REV. OSCAR R. SMITH...1934-1943

9. REV. CHRISTIAN M. HOLLENSSEN, 1944-

brought the question of religious education sharply to the fore. The Rev. Mr. Smith organized and directed a daily Vacation Bible School, which opened June 4, 1935, for a period of four weeks. This school has been conducted each summer with one exception when sufficient teachers could not be found, with an average attendance of between 125 and 150 pupils, many of them children of non-member parents.

Deeply interested in evangelism, the Rev. Mr. Smith urged the appointment of a congregational committee on evangelism for the purpose of winning souls for Christ and increasing the membership. He stressed this effort throughout his pastorate. He was chairman of the Committee on Evangelism of the Ohio District and was a member of the Committee on Church Life and Growth of the American Lutheran Church. He delivered a series of sermons over WKBV, the local radio station, and served as chairman of the Board of the Wernle Children's Home. Under his direction the congregation participated in various phases of the "Forward in Faith" program of the American Lutheran Church.

The Rev. Mr. Smith introduced the use of a mimeographed bulletin for distribution at the Sunday services, giving the order of service and general church news.

Under direction of the Rev. Mr. Smith the Sunday School rooms were remodeled and some new classes added. Use also was made of some of the Parish House rooms for Sunday School work, with the entire Nursery and Primary Departments meeting there.

Music has been cultivated in the congregation for many years, originally under the direction of the parish school teacher. It is not known when the first choir was organized but it probably was in the early days of the congregation. Instruction in singing was part of the regular course in the schools. Teacher Maier directed the choir in the 32 years of his residence. His successor, Teacher Linsenmann directed a number of cantatas, one of them on the occasion of the dedication of the new pipe organ.

With the departure of Teacher Henry Zimmerman in 1934, Miss Helen Eichhorn was engaged as organist and choir director. Upon her resignation, the congregation on June 25, 1935, engaged Miss Mary Stonebrook as organist, choir leader and for secretarial work. She resigned July 7, 1941, and Miss Nelle Dohmen of Mt. Vernon, Ohio, began serving in a similar capacity, September 1, 1941. In addition to the Choir, the congregation has a Men's Chorus, Sunday School Orchestra, Ladies' Chorus and a Children's Choir, all of which enhance the beauty of the services or sing or play on special occasions.

The congregation was host to the annual convention of the Ohio District, June 20-23, 1939.

The Brotherhood of the congregation was organized January 25,

1935, by the adoption of a constitution and by-laws. Its purpose is service to the congregation, the community, and the American Lutheran Church. In addition to program activities, the Brotherhood has contributed to many projects and has interested itself in the promotion of activities within the congregation. In 1936, the Brotherhood and the two Luther Leagues purchased 200 new chairs for the auditorium of the Parish House.

Owing to the interest taken in athletics by various groups of children and young people, an Athletic Committee was set up by the congregation, April 5, 1935, consisting of two members from each of the following organizations: Vestry, Brotherhood, Luther League, Sunday School and Ladies' Aid Society.

Following a suggestion of the Rev. Mr. Smith all the Lutheran congregations of the city for a number of years have participated in a joint Reformation Day service.

A Young People's Society was in existence as early as 1889. An old minute book records the adoption of a constitution on April 2, 1891. The Society was the only one for a number of years which promoted a social and entertainment program for the young people. In addition to this, its members were active in congregational projects. It retained the name Young People's Society until September 6, 1933, when it adopted the name Luther League. The reason for the change was because similar organizations in other congregations were functioning as Luther Leagues. With the organization of a Junior League by the Rev. Mr. Smith, the older organization became known as the Senior Luther League. The Senior Luther League was in existence until May, 1942, when it suspended operations. One of its last acts was to present to the congregation both the colors of the country and the flag of the Lutheran Church, each with a standard, and flanking the altar.

A Luther League, whose membership largely was made up of young married people, was organized by the Rev. Mr. Feeger. It functioned side by side with the Young People's Society until 1929. Meetings of the League were held in the homes of the members. This League was in existence until late in 1929 when it disbanded and transferred a balance in its treasury to the Young People's Society. The Luther League was revived when the Young People's Society adopted the name in September, 1933.

Re-organization of the Senior Luther League is expected after the conclusion of World War II when more of the young men have returned home and again begin taking part in the activities of the church. The Junior Luther League is operating in the centennial year.

Since 1939 the congregation has been a member of the Pension Fund which the American Lutheran Church has established for the support of

aged ministers. The congregation and the pastor pay a stipulated sum annually under this insurance plan.

A bequest of \$1,000 in the will of Fred Hackman enabled the congregation to introduce the new American Lutheran hymnals in 1941; book racks were attached to the benches; the church insulated and other improvements made at a total cost of \$1,734.67, part of which was paid by the Senior and Junior Luther Leagues and the Ladies Aid Society. In 1936, \$600 was received from the Louise Erk estate for the debt fund.

Late in December, 1940, Mr. Otto H. Sieweke of Ferndale, Michigan, gave the congregation \$5,000, to which he added \$2,500 a year later, for the establishment of the Sophia Sieweke Memorial Fund, in honor of his mother, long a devoted member of the church. Under the terms of the gift the money is to be used for the type of memorial Mr. Sieweke's heirs may designate. A bequest of \$1,000, made by the late Mary Quatz many years ago, is in the nature of an endowment.

It is impossible to list special gifts which members have made to the corporate congregation in the 100 years of its existence, or to set out the gifts which have been made to the educational, missionary and benevolent enterprises of the Church at large, and in response to local and national appeals. All these gifts, large and small, made by individuals and by the congregation demonstrate an abiding faith in Christ, their Savior and Redeemer.

The congregation has been represented continuously by members on the Board of the Wernle Children's Home since it was founded. They have served on other boards and commissions of the old Joint Synod of Ohio and of the American Lutheran Church, and in other capacities have promoted the interests of the Church.

The constitution of the congregation is in the process of being revised in the centennial year.

The congregation has maintained close contact with its sons and daughters who are in the service of their government in the present war period. Monthly letters, written by Pastors Smith and Hollensen, contain spiritual comfort and cheer. The Sunday bulletin and other literature are forwarded regularly to their addresses. Organizations of the church remember them with gifts on Christmas and on other occasions. When this history was written the only member of St. John's church killed in the first World War and the present one was Lt. Glen Strothman, with the U. S. Air Forces. Corp. Ray Crome, U. S. Marine Corps., died of pneumonia in the Naval Hospital at San Diego, California. More than 60 members of the congregation were serving with the armed forces in 1944.

In tribute to the congregation's members in the armed services, a beautiful service flag was presented by Mr. and Mrs. Carl H. Duning, who

like other families had sons in uniform. The flag was dedicated at a special service on Sunday night, November 22, 1942.

The flag was hung on the wall north of the pulpit, and following redecoration of the church interior during the centennial year it was placed on a standard in the same location. Not only sons and husbands were honored, because in World War II St. John's sent its first woman into the service when Miss Louise Dingwerth, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Dingwerth, became an army nurse and was commissioned a lieutenant.

The Rev. Mr. Smith submitted his resignation, which was accepted by the congregation, November 3, 1943, to accept a call to a congregation in Oaklawn, a suburb of Chicago.

Rev. C. M. Hollensen called in 1944

The centennial year marked the beginning of the pastorate of Rev. C. M. Hollensen who was called January 16, 1944, and was installed by Dr. J. W. Schillinger, president of the Ohio District, assisted by Dr. G. C. Gast, supply pastor, on February 27.

The Rev. Mr. Hollensen assumed the pastorate of one of the pioneer congregations among the 40 organized religious groups of the community. In addition to St. John's, the American Lutheran Church is represented by Trinity Lutheran, organized in 1892, Rev. Herbert Nottbohm, pastor. St. Paul's organized in 1852, Rev. A. H. Keck, pastor; First English Lutheran, founded 1884, Rev. Frank Hurst, pastor; Second English Lutheran, founded 1892, Rev. O. B. Noren, pastor are members of the United Lutheran Church.

Preparations for the centennial anniversary were well under way under the direction of Raymond Duning, chairman of the Executive Committee, when the Rev. Mr. Hollensen arrived.

A summary of the official acts listed in the records of the congregation for the first century, including those which were performed prior to the formal organization of the congregation, as of August 9, 1944, follows:

Baptisms, 2,390; Confirmations, 2,027; Weddings, 1,004; and Funerals, 1,306.

The confirmed membership in 1944 was 620.

In preparation for the centennial anniversary the interior of the Church was redecorated at a cost of \$3,000 by the G. H. Schanbacher and Son Company of Springfield, Ill. This firm had the contract for decorating the Church when it was built in 1908. The Church was rededicated on June 4, 1944.

A series of special services marked the commemoration of the centennial throughout 1944, opening with a cantata by the Senior Choir on Palm Sunday, April 2, under the direction of Miss Nelle Dohmen. Guest soloists were Richard Little of Richmond and George Schultz of Columbus, Ohio.

On June 4, the Brotherhood sponsored a Memorial Service designed especially to honor those in armed service. The speaker was Rev. Elmer Zimmerman, of Fremont, Ohio, a son of Teacher Henry Zimmerman. The redecorated Church was rededicated by the Rev. Mr. Hollensen at this service.

The next event was a Youth Sunday program on June 25, sponsored by the Sunday School, with George Schultz of Columbus, Ohio, as guest speaker. Children of the various departments were heard in songs and recitations.

On August 13, a joint service was held with Trinity Lutheran Church. Rev. Herbert Nottbohm of Trinity delivered the sermon, using as his topic, "God's Investment." In the afternoon a picnic was held at Wernle Home under auspices of the Sunday School.

A congregational reunion, for which invitations were sent to hundreds of former members living elsewhere, was on the program for September 10. Rev. Charles J. Lochr, of Pittsburgh, a son of the congregation, was invited to be the speaker.

An interesting feature of the reunion was to be the collection of relics and old photographs reminiscent of former years. This was under direction of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Atzinger.

Still in a good state of preservation is the Bible used by Rev. J. C. Schulze, the first pastor. A photograph of this Bible, with Pastor Schulze's signature barely discernible in the lower right hand corner, is on Page 15. Another reminder of bygone days is one of two chairs used by wedding couples during marriage ceremonies in the church. The bride and groom sat upon these chairs in front of the congregation. One of the chairs has disappeared but the other is in the sacresty.

Other plans in process when this publication was written included a Missionary service in charge of the Women's Missionary Society on October 15, with Rev. Paul C. Freyberg of the Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, Conn., a former missionary to New Guinea, as the speaker; a Reformation observance on October 29, with Rev. Oscar R. Smith, former pastor, speaking at the morning service and Rev. E. W. Schramm of Columbus, Ohio, editor of *The Lutheran Standard*, addressing a joint service of all Lutheran churches in the city later in the day; the chief anniversary service on December 3, with Dr. Em. Poppen, president of the American Lutheran Church as the speaker, and a final service in

charge of the vestry on December 17. Also, St. John's church was chosen by the Woman's club for its annual Christmas musicale on the afternoon of December 17.

Such is the story of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church today, such is the story of the century that lies behind it.

From the day that the first Lutheran immigrants assembled about a crude altar fashioned from a store-box and draped in black in their little brick church on South Fourth Street to this hour when a later generation worships God in the impressive environment of a stately edifice, the pastors of St. John's have pointed souls to the Way, the Truth, the Life and directed members to good citizenship in God's Kingdom and in their community. From St. John's have gone forth steadily those imponderable influences that build character in individuals and stability in the community.

So, St. John's ends its first one hundred years. It regrets, sincerely so, its mistakes in judgment, its shortsightedness in the prosecution of the Lord's work, its sins of omission and commission. It is proud, humbly so, of its heritage, its devotion to the Truth, its abiding faith in Christ, its desire to serve mankind.

Here the centennial record concludes in the identical words of the exhortation addressed in fervent spirit to the members of St. John's congregation by the author of the history of its first seventy-five years:

"Remember that much has been entrusted to you and that much will also be required. What a gracious reward awaits you if you are faithful unto the end, when Christ shall be revealed in His glory! Therefore, be faithful unto death and Christ will give you the crown of life!

"And now may God continue to bless you in the future as in the past. May He grant you His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace you may be enabled to believe His Holy Word and to lead a godly life here in time and hereafter in eternity. With hearts thus established in the faith you can expectantly look forward to the realization of God's glorious promise: 'Those that he planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to show that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.'"—Psalm 92, 13-15.

"Yea, 'I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing.'"

The 1944 Church Council and Organization Officers

Pastor—C. M. Hollensen.

Elders—Henry Kaeuper, Harry H. Tubesing.

Trustees—John H. Niewoehner, President; Elmer H. Placke, Secretary; Fred J. Wiesehahn, Treasurer.

Deacons—Chester W. Ballard, Oscar Brand, Edwin Drathring, Edwin Kanke, Ralph Kaeuper, Carl Kauper, Fred Radke, Clarence Schneider.

Financial Secretary—Fred Lohman.

Debt Fund Treasurer—Arthur Kauper.

Music Director and Church Secretary—Nelle Dohmen.

Church Custodian—Elmer Frauman.

Sunday School Officers—Edward Kaeuper, Superintendent; Ezra Kauper, Assistant Superintendent; Martha Pilgrim, Secretary; Dorothy Johnson, Assistant Secretary; James Wiesehahn, Treasurer; Pianists, Robert Duning and Lucille Tiemeyer. Departmental Superintendents are: Mrs. Warren Tiemeyer, Cradle Roll; Mrs. Harold Tappen, Nursery; Marie Meyer, Primary; Robert Kaeuper, Junior; Mrs. Willard Hirschfeld, Intermediate; and George Kauper, Senior.

Choir Officers—Nelle Dohmen, Director; Theckla Straus, Secretary and Treasurer.

Women's Missionary Society—Mrs. Carl Kehlenbrink, President; Mrs. Willard Hirschfeld, Vice President; Mrs. Robt. Kehlenbrink, Secretary; Mrs. Edwin Habighorst, Treasurer.

Junior Mission Band—Julian Kramer, President; Edward Stegman, Vice President; Robert Howes, Secretary; Neil Wood, Treasurer; Annette Placke, Pianist. Leaders are: Mrs. Bernard Cunningham, Chairman; Mrs. Robt. Tubesing, Mrs. Chester Ballard, and Miss Doris Kemper.

Ladies' Aid Society—Mrs. Harry Wiesehahn, President; Mrs. Robert Tubesing, Vice President; Mrs. George Peters, Secretary; Mrs. Carl Kauper, Treasurer.

Junior Luther League—Dorothy Johnson, President; Robert Woods, Vice President; Daisy Miley, Secretary; Robert Coffey, Treasurer. Pianists are Emily Jean Howes and Tommy Kehlenbrink.

Brotherhood—Howard Kanke, President; Oscar Brand, Vice President; Chester Ballard, Secretary; and Edwin Wickemeyer, Treasurer.

Centennial Committee

Executive Committee—Raymond Duning, Chairman; Norman Pilgrim, Ed. Wickemeyer, Mrs. Floyd Gross, Marie Schneider.

Church History—Luther Feeger, Chairman; Edward Kaeuper, Harry Tubesing, Richard Atzinger.

Music Committee—Nelle Dohmen, Chairman; Wm. C. Tiemeyer, Arthur Kauper, Wilma Tubesing, Raymond Duning.

Decorating Committee—Mrs. Floyd Gross, Chairman; Edwin Drathring, Harold Tappen, Mrs. George Peters, Herbert Schuerman, Mrs. George Kauper, Mrs. Carl Kauper, Mrs. Chas. Etsinger, Walter Kuntz, John Schwenke.

Committee on Speakers—Carl Duning, Chairman; Robert Schuerman, Edwin Habinghorst, Rev. C. M. Hollensen.

Committee for Reunion Sunday—George Kauper, Chairman; Edward Helmich.

Ladies' Missionary Society—Mrs. Carl Kehlenbrink, Mrs. Fred Theurer.

Ladies' Aid Society—Mrs. Harry Wieseahn, Mrs. Robert Tubesing, Mrs. Carl Kauper, Mrs. George Peters.

Brotherhood—Howard Kanke, Ralph Kauper, Dr. Robert Tubesing, Elmer Kanke.

Sunday School—Edward Kaeuper, Ezra Kauper.

Committee to Collect Old Photos and Relics for Reunion—Mr. and Mrs. Richard Atzinger, Mrs. Henry Rothert, Mrs. Fred Theurer, Mrs. George Horning, Warren Tiemeyer, Paul Nolte, Gertrude Nicklas.

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